

S5 / Lx / Syntax / Final Examination / Dec 2018 / 90 minutes.

Read the instructions carefully and answer accordingly.

1. Write a paragraph of approximately 60 words to outline the characteristics of an adequate theory of language(8 points).

An adequate theory of language aims at explaining the phenomenon of human language acquisition by explaining the LAD that differentiates the human brain from that of other creatures. The theory should be general, simple, neat, and economical; it should also be able to account for all language phenomena. Technically, a theory should satisfy the three levels of adequacy, namely observation, description, and explanation. (64 words)

2. Explain the ill-formedness of the following constructions (2 points each).

a.* the a book.

This construction is a clear violation of the X-bar requirements of constituent well-formedness, which stipulate that a head is to have one and only one SPEC.

b.* the children made.

This construction is a violation of the requirements of the argument structure of the predicate 'make', which is a two-place predicate.

c. *quickly cooked John dinner.

This construction violates the rules of the word order of English, which is a SPEC, HEAD, COMPLEMENT, and ADJUNCT language. The construction is of the order ADJUNCT, HEAD, SPEC, and COMPLEMENT, which results in an ill-formed construction.

d.*He slowly rehearse the play.

The construction is headless, which is a violation of the requirements of X-bar theory. The verb is not inflected, and if it were, the construction would be an I'', but because the verb is not conjugated, then the construction has no clear category.

3. Draw trees for these sentences (2 points each).

a.He informed me he did the homework the teacher assigned.

This is an I'' with an embedded C''; the C is empty; the tree should display these properties.

b.Read the book you should read for the exam.

This is an I'' with an empty SPEC and an embedded C''; the C is empty; the tree should display these properties.